In the Budget speech of 2008-09, hon'ble MR announced the setting up a new Rail Coach Factory at Palghat, Kerala. Government of Kerala has promised to make 1000 acres of land available free of cost for this project. Estimated to cost Rs. 1215 crores, this factory shall manufacture 600 coaches per year. Requisite approval for this project is under process.

In the Budget speech of 2009-10, hon'ble MR has announced setting up of a new coach factory in state-of-the-art facility to manufacture about 500 EMU/MEMU and Metro coaches per annum in Kancharapara-Halisahar Railway Complex where Railway land is available. This unit will be set up in joint venture/public private partnership. Details of the project are being worked out.

Repair of Rail bridges

847. DR. RAM PRAKASH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether fitness certificate has been obtained to run trains on all major rail bridges;

(b) whether Railways have the design of all rail bridges; and

(c) the number of bridges constructed during British rule the repair of which has been carried out by the Centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Train operations of passenger carrying trains on a new Bridge are started only after receipt of sanction from Commissioner of Railway Safety. Further, to ensure the safety of passenger and trains, a regular and rigorous system of inspection of Bridges is followed on Indian Railways. Under this system, all the Bridges are thoroughly inspected once a year as a focused attention. In addition, the inspecting officials also inspect the Bridges during their routine inspections.

(b) All Railway Bridges have been constructed either as per standard drawings issued by Research Designs & Standards Organization (RDSO) or as per designs made by Zonal Railways. Completion drawings of some of old Bridges are not available. However, in case of such Bridges also, safety is completely ensured by a focused attention during inspections.

(c) Rehabilitation/rebuilding/strengthening of Bridges is an ongoing work on Indian Railways. Rehabilitation/rebuilding/strengthening of Bridges is undertaken on the basis of their physical condition as ascertained during regular inspections carried out in the field and not on the basis of age. Therefore, all old Bridges do not necessarily require rehabilitation/rebuilding/strengthening. During the last five years, a total of 6720 no. of Rail Bridges have been rehabilitated/rebuilt/ strengthened on Indian Railway system.

Merger of Braithwaite and Co. Ltd. with Railways

†848.SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(a) whether any memorandum or request has been received by Government to merge Braithwaite and Co. Ltd. (B.C.L.) with Railways;

(b) if so, the steps taken, so far, in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) As announced by Hon'ble Minister of Railways in her budget speech of 2009-10, process is being initiated for transfer wagon units of Burn Standard and Braithwaite & Co. Ltd. (BCL) to MOR. A dialogue has already been started with concerned Ministry for waiver of accumulated liabilities of Burn Standard Co. Ltd. and inter ministerial discussion for transfer of BCL shall be started soon.

(c) Does not arise.

Unused railway land

†849.SHRI PRABHAT JHA:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have additional land that remains unused;

(b) if so, the details of available land, throughout the country, State-wise;

(c) whether Government proposes to bring such land under use for other activities or commercial purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the steps Government is taking to save unused land from encroachment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (e) Details are being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Connecting Udhampur with Qazigund

850. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a plan to connect Udhampur with Qazigund in Kashmir by the Railways; and

(b) if so, by when the plan would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Udhampur-Katra (25 km.) portion is targeted to be completed by December, 2011, The alignment between Katra-Qazigund is under review and an Expert Committee appointed to study

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi